

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An image generation system comprising:
  - a memory which stores a program and data for image generating; and
  - at least one processor which is connected to the memory and performs processing for image generating,
  - the processor performing:
    - depth cueing only for an object ~~on condition that the object is positioned~~ within a depth cueing area such that the color of the object being more distant from a viewpoint is made closer to a target color, the depth cueing area being ~~part~~ defined as a partial subset of a viewing volume based on a position of the viewpoint and includes a backward clipping plane of the viewing volume;
    - varying an alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value of the object on condition that the object is positioned within the depth cueing area so that the object being more distant from the viewpoint becomes more transparent;
    - varying a depth cueing value for each vertex of the object based on a Z-value for each vertex of the object;
    - varying the alpha value for each vertex of the object based on the Z-value for each vertex of the object;
    - sorting objects within the depth cueing area so that the objects are drawn in succession starting from an object nearest to the viewpoint; and
    - drawing an image viewable from a virtual camera in an object space in drawing order determined by the sorting processing while performing hidden-surface erasing based on a Z-buffer process for the objects within the depth cueing area,

wherein the processor performs processing so that the depth cueing value increases based on an increase in the Z-value, the depth cueing value being a parameter for determining the strength of the depth cueing effect that results in the color of the object being brought closer to the target color as the Z-value increases.

2. (Previously Presented) The image generation system as defined in claim 1, the processor further performing:  
drawing a most distant background including a color different from the target color.

3-9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) An image generation system comprising:  
a memory which stores a program and data for image generating; and  
at least one processor which is connected to the memory and performs processing for image generating,  
the processor performing:  
varying an alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value of an object depending on the distance between the object and ~~the~~ viewpoint ~~on condition that~~ only when the object is positioned within a depth cueing area, the depth cueing area being ~~part~~ defined as a partial subset of a viewing volume based on a position of the viewpoint and includes a backward clipping plane of the viewing volume;

sorting objects within the depth cueing area so that the objects are drawn in succession starting from an object nearest to the viewpoint; and

drawing an image viewable from a virtual camera in an object space in drawing order determined by the sorting processing while performing hidden-surface erasing based on a Z-buffer process for the objects within the depth cueing area,

wherein the processor performs processing so that a depth cueing value

increases based on an increase in the Z-value, the depth cueing value being a parameter for determining the strength of the depth cueing effect that results in the color of the object being brought closer to the target color as the Z-value increases.

11. (Currently Amended) A computer readable information storage medium encoded with a computer program, the computer program comprising a processing routine for implementing:

depth cueing only for an object ~~on condition that the object is positioned~~ within a depth cueing area such that the color of the object being more distant from a viewpoint is made closer to a target color, the depth cueing area being ~~part~~defined as a partial subset of a viewing volume based on a position of the viewpoint and includes a backward clipping plane of the viewing volume;

varying an alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value of the object on condition that the object is positioned within the depth cueing area so that the object being more distant from the viewpoint becomes more transparent;

varying a depth cueing value for each vertex of the object based on a Z-value for each vertex of the object;

varying the alpha value for each vertex of the object based on the Z-value for each vertex of the object;

sorting objects within the depth cueing area so that the objects are drawn in succession starting from an object nearest to the viewpoint; and

drawing an image viewable from a virtual camera in an object space in drawing order determined by the sorting processing while performing hidden-surface erasing based on a Z-buffer process for the objects within the depth cueing area,

wherein the processing routine performs processing so that the depth cueing value increases based on an increase in the Z-value, the depth cueing value being a parameter

for determining the strength of the depth cueing effect that results in the color of the object being brought closer to the target color as the Z-value increases.

12. (Previously Presented) The computer readable information storage medium as defined in claim 11, further comprising a processing routine for implementing:

drawing a most distant background including a color different from the target color.

13-19. (Canceled)

20. (Currently Amended) A computer readable information storage medium encoded with a computer program, the computer program comprising a processing routine for implementing:

varying an alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value of an object depending on the distance between the object and the viewpoint ~~on condition that~~ only when the object is positioned within a depth cueing area, the depth cueing area being ~~part~~ defined as a partial subset of a viewing volume based on a position of the viewpoint and includes a backward clipping plane of the viewing volume;

sorting objects within the depth cueing area so that the objects are drawn in succession starting from an object nearest to the viewpoint; and

drawing an image viewable from a virtual camera in an object space in drawing order determined by the sorting processing while performing hidden-surface erasing based on a Z-buffer process for the objects within the depth cueing area,

wherein the processing routine performs processing so that the depth cueing value increases based on an increase in the Z-value, the depth cueing value being a parameter for determining the strength of the depth cueing effect that results in the color of the object being brought closer to the target color as the Z-value increases.

21. (Currently Amended) An image generation method comprising:

depth cueing only for an object ~~on condition that the object is positioned~~ within a depth cueing area such that the color of the object being more distant from a viewpoint is made closer to a target color, the depth cueing area being partdefined as a partial subset of a viewing volume based on a position of the viewpoint and includes a backward clipping plane of the viewing volume;

varying an alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value of the object on condition that the object is positioned within the depth cueing area so that the object being more distant from the viewpoint becomes more transparent;

varying a depth cueing value for each vertex of the object based on a Z-value for each vertex of the object;

varying the alpha value for each vertex of the object based on the Z-value for each vertex of the object;

sorting objects within the depth cueing area so that the objects are drawn in succession starting from an object nearest to the viewpoint; and

drawing an image viewable from a virtual camera in an object space in drawing order determined by the sorting processing while performing hidden-surface erasing based on a Z-buffer process for the objects within the depth cueing area,

wherein the depth cueing value increases based on an increase in the Z-value, the depth cueing value being a parameter for determining the strength of the depth cueing effect that results in the color of the object being brought closer to the target color as the Z-value increases.

22. (Original) The image generation method as defined in claim 21, further comprising:

drawing a most distant background including a color different from the target color.

23-26. (Canceled)

27. (Currently Amended) An image generation method comprising:

varying an alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value of an object depending on the distance between the object and ~~the~~ a viewpoint on condition that only when the object is positioned within a depth cueing area, the depth cueing area being ~~part~~ defined as a partial subset of a viewing volume based on a position of the viewpoint and includes a backward clipping plane of the viewing volume;

sorting objects within the depth cueing area so that the objects is drawn sequentially from an object nearest to the viewpoint; and

drawing an image viewable from virtual camera in an object space in drawing order determined by the sorting processing while performing hidden-surface erasing based on Z-buffer process for the objects within the depth cueing area,

wherein the depth cueing value increases based on an increase in the Z-value,  
the depth cueing value being a parameter for determining the strength of the depth cueing  
effect that results in the color of the object being brought closer to the target color as the Z-  
value increases.

28-33. (Canceled)